T/SOR/22/7/13

Stop the War by Socialism

I.L.P. Policy Stated by

FENNER BROCKWAY

with a foreword by

John McGovern, M.P.

2d.

INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY
318 Regents Park Road, London, N.3

BEST

FOREWORD

By JOHN McGOVERN, M.P.

EVERYBODY is asking: "How can this war be shortened, how can it be *stopped* without letting Hitler get away with it?"

This pamphlet answers that question. It contains the Policy Statement adopted by the last Annual Conference of the I.L.P. and the clear speech with which Fenner Brockway presented that Statement to the Conference.

I ask you to read this pamphlet carefully. This country and the world are in a terribly serious situation and each one of us has some responsibility to help get us all out of it.

We want the war to be ended as soon as possible, not by the victory of Nazism, not by the victory of Imperialism, but by the victory of the common people of all lands.

This pamphlet shows the way. If you agree with it, your duty is to help us to carry out the policy it puts forward. You should join the I.L.P. and work with us to end the war by Socialism. If our case convinces you, sign the Join Form at the end.

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THE WAY OUT

By FENNER BROCKWAY

AS the months pass more nations are swept into the war. It began with four belligerents: Germany, Poland, France and the British Empire. In the spring of 1940 it extended to Finland, Denmark, and Norway, to be followed by the invasion of Holland and Belgium and the participation of Italy. In the spring of this year the German armies invaded Greece and Yugoslavia. He would be a bold man who ventured to prophesy the extent of the war in a year's time. It may easily be that before then the U.S.A. and Japan will be involved. The whole world is going into destruction.

What way out of this terrible situation does the I.L.P. offer? I will try to put it as clearly as I can.

THE CAUSE OF THE WAR

In the view of the I.L.P. the basic cause of this war is Imperialist, arising mainly from the conflict between the German and British possessing classes for the raw materials and markets of the world.

In our view the issue of dictatorship and democracy is irrelevant, **so far as the cause is concerned**. If both Britain and Germany had been "democratic" countries, the war would still have happened. If both countries had been dictatorships the war would have happened. It is not the political structure of the two countries which caused the war, but the economic clash between their capitalist classes.

AGAINST NAZISM

But this does not mean that we are indifferent to the issue of dictatorship and democracy. We are utterly opposed to the system of Nazism. I believe we can claim without exaggeration that no Party in proportion to its resources has fought Nazism from the time of its very beginnings with a persistency and vigour greater than the I.L.P.

We took part in the struggle in Germany at the side of our German Socialist comrades before the coming to power of Hitler. We helped them in their illegal struggle after Hitler came to power. We have maintained a certain contact with them in their work against Hitler even since the war began.

We know what Nazism means. Our own comrades in Germany, many known personally to us. have been its victims, imprisoned, thrust into concentration camps, tortured, done to death. We know that Nazism destroys, temporarily at least, the independent

Exchequer. The function of the Labour Ministers, particularly that of Mr. Herbert Morrison and Mr. Ernest Bevin, is to discipline the working-class in the interests of Capitalism. It was Mr. Morrison who suppressed the "Daily Worker." It is Mr. Bevin who is applying industrial conscription.

THE I.L.P. AIM

I turn to the policy of the I.L.P. It is not enough to cry "Stop the War." We are concerned with *how* the war is to be stopped. As a political party we must make our contribution to the end we have in view.

We have two purposes: first, the ending of the war, and, second, the ending of the war by Socialism. I believe we have reached the moment in history when these two purposes have become identical, or at least are rapidly becoming so. Increasingly it is becoming clear that the way to end the war is the way of Socialism.

THE GOVERNMENT PLAN

Before I develop that point, let us look at the Government plan for the war. During 1941 and 1942 Britain is to be satisfied with holding its own—preventing German interference with British shipping in the Atlantic and on the other seas, preventing the German invasion of Britain, holding back the German threat to Africa and the Near East. Then by 1943 it is hoped that the supply of armaments from America will be sufficient to make Britain dominant in mechanical warfare, enabling a military offensive in Europe and elsewhere to take place. How long this military offensive will require to go on is not calculated—it may be '44 or '45—it may be '50.

The practicability of the Government plan is doubtful. There are military experts who doubt whether the German military organisation in Europe could be defeated even then, and whether Britain will be able to overcome the food blockade for so long a period remains to be seen. But even if the practicability of the plan be conceded, at the end of it we should not have a world of peace. Hitler would be defeated, but Capitalism would remain and British-American Imperialism would dominate Europe and the Continents. No Socialist will see the emancipation of humanity in that.

And consider the cost. It means the ever-extending destruction of both British and European towns by bombing from the air; it means the destruction of millions of lives in Europe, Africa, Asia; it means years of deepening physical hunger and of undermining nervous strain; it means the degradation of everything we regard as civilised and of the finer humanitarian sentiments; it means that this generation will commit a crime on the coming generation which will darken the pages of history, starving the children in

body and mind and bequeathing to them a world of wreckage and ruin.

Can we contemplate this and not seek an alternative? The I.L.P. offers an alternative.

THE I.L.P. ALTERNATIVE

The I.L.P. says that not only can this terrible prospect for the people of this country and of Europe be avoided, but the disaster of the present situation can be turned to hope. The war can be shortened—and it can be shortened in such a way that at its end there will be real ground for believing that the horror of war will not be repeated.

The alternative to the military method of ending the war is the political method. A military victory over Hitler is problematical and, as I have said, it would substitute American-British Imperialism for Nazism. Victory over Hitlerism by the political method could be achieved **if we had a Socialist Government in this country** and it would destroy Imperialism as well as Nazism.

There is no doubt that the vast majorities of the peoples in the Nazi-occupied territories bitterly resent Nazism. This is true of Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France, Yugoslavia and Greece. **The way to shorten the war is to win these peoples as active allies against Hitler.**

THIS GOVERNMENT WON'T DO IT

But the fact must be faced that a British capitalist Government is not likely to win these millions of Europeans as allies because it cannot offer them any inspiring alternative to Nazism. Hitler offers Europe a new order. It would impose political subjection, but it offers the agricultural communities outside Germany, who, let us remember, are seven-eighths of the whole, attractive baits. It is a plan for the unification of Europe, a plan under which the agricultural communities would be linked up with the industrial centres. It offers the hope of greater economic security to the half-starved peasants of Central Europe and of the Balkans such as they have never had. Their products would be taken in bulk by Germany for its industrial population and in return Germany would exchange its manufactured goods. This is a plan which will make some appeal to the peasants, despite the accompaniments of individual and national subjection, because, never let us forget, the most urgent need of hungry peoples is food and they will sacrifice much for economic security.

The British National Government has no plan to offer Europe as an alternative to this Nazi plan, no scheme to guarantee the impoverished peasants economic security. When Mr. Winston Churchill addressed the Council of the Conservative Party in March, 1941, he said quite frankly that British statesmen can only utter

the towns which have been bombed, where women are more and more saying, "What is the use of it all?"

Fifth, I put the growing realisation among members of Peace Organisations that Pacifism is not enough. Among the younger men and women specially there is a strong turn towards Socialism, a realisation that to be against war is futile unless one is also advocating a practical policy which will shorten its horror.

J. B. PRIESTLEY'S BROADCASTS

We are also now seeing remarkable tendencies, which should be welcomed, from other sections of the community. I listened to J. B. Priestley's broadcast in which he declared that the way to shorten the war is for Britain to carry through changes in Britain itself, establishing social equality and liberty, which will convince the peoples of Europe that we are sincere in our desire for a better world. There is Capt. Liddell Hart, the military expert, who says that victory will be won not by a military offensive, but by a psychological offensive, based on an example of social justice and freedom in our own land.

There is the movement led by Sir Richard Acland, who does not use the term Socialism, who rejects the I.L.P. view of the necessity of class struggle, but who, nevertheless, wants a new Britain of social equality which will have the right to offer social equality and liberty to Europe and the world.

There is the fact, which no one who travels about the country will dispute, that men and women everywhere, are turning to new solutions, are realising that the old system of Capitalism cannot endure. This is reflected in the remarkable circulation which books advocating a new social order are reaching. This opinion is not yet clear, not defined in purpose, but it will move towards our position if a swift, definite and courageous lead is given.

During the coming months I hope we shall have gone far to mobilise these forces. Long before the two or three years which the war is expected to last I believe we shall have a movement capable of winning power for Socialism.

WHAT SOCIALIST BRITAIN WOULD DO

That power would be used in a great Socialist Peace Offensive founded and inspired by Socialist changes made in Britain and the Empire.

Social inequality would be ended. The privileges of the possessing class, the monopolists, the bankers, the landlords would be ended. No longer would there be rich and poor. All that is available would be distributed fairly among the whole population. The rule of the old school tie in Government, civil services and the armed forces would become a thing of the past. Workers' control would be established in industry. We should lay the foundations of the co-operative, classless society.

The Empire would be liberated. The prison doors would be opened. India would be free. The leaders of the colonial peoples would be called into consultation as equals to decide the future of their countries. British capitalist exploitation of the colonial territories would be ended.

Having approached its task in Britain and the Empire in this spirit, the Socialist Government would say to the peoples of Europe, "Let us end this war. Our proposals for ending the war are the same as those we have carried out in Britain and the Empire." Would not the war-weary peoples respond to that appeal? Would not they overcome all obstacles which stood in the way? Would they not rise in their strength all over Europe to overthrow a Hitler which opposed their determination?

SOCIALISM IS THE WAY

Socialism is not only the way to stop all war in the future. It is the way to stop **this** war now. It is the way to shorten the war. It is the way to get a peace which will liberate the world both from Nazism and Imperialism.

Socialists of this generation have the greatest task that any generation of men and women ever had to undertake. We may seem small in numbers for that task, but all the human qualities in the minds of millions in all lands are on our side. Let us make our appeal to those qualities—to the love of freedom, to the sense of social justice, to the ideal of fraternity, to the longing for peace. On our success depends not only the liberation of the present generation from the destruction of the war, but the founding of the new human order which will allow future generations to develop in peace.

JOIN THE I.L.P.

Please forward me particulars of Membership of the I.L.P.

Name.....

Address .....

.....

Send to the General Secretary, John McNair,
318 Regents Park Road, London, N.3

SOCIALISM AND THE WAR

THE following Statement of Policy was adopted unanimously by the I.L.P. Annual Conference, April 12th to 14th, 1941.

1. The I.L.P. opposes the Government and the war which the Government is waging.

IMPERIALIST-LABOUR COALITION

2. Despite the participation of the Labour Party, the main purpose of the Government continues to be the defence of the capitalist-imperialist system. It is, in fact, a coalition between the most reactionary Tory imperialist elements and the Labour Party. The control of foreign policy, of India and the colonies, and of finance and industry remains in Tory hands, whilst the chief function of the Labour Ministers is to discipline the working class. The first measure introduced by this Imperialist-Labour Coalition, giving the Government power to take control of all property and persons, was heralded as a Socialist measure. In practice, it has been used to dragoon labour whilst maintaining the profit-making system.

REASONS FOR OPPOSITION

3. The I.L.P. opposes the war for the following reasons :—

(a) War is the most brutal evil of the present system of society, an evil which it is a first object of Socialism to end ;

(b) The fundamental cause of the war is Imperialist-Capitalism's struggle for world trade, sources of raw material, spheres of influence. This economic struggle is an essential part of the present social system and must, so long as this system remains, find its sharpest expression in military warfare. Understanding this, the I.L.P. strives for the overthrow of Capitalism and the establishment of Socialism, since this is the only way forward to permanent peace. The destruction of Capitalism involves the abolition, not only of its economic basis, but of its political structure (the Nation State) and of the division of the world into rival Empires.

NOT FOR DEMOCRACY

4. The supreme purpose for which the British Government declared war on Germany was not the defence of democracy, as it alleged, but the maintenance of the Empire and of British capitalist interests. This is proved by the methods which it is using. In particular :—

(a) Its diplomacy uses only alliances with Capitalist and Fascist States (e.g. Spain). By the nature of its class composition it is incapable of encouraging an alliance with the working-class anti-fascist masses

in the Nazi-occupied territories, the anti-fascist elements in Germany and Italy, and the anti-fascist refugees in this country.

(b) It uses the imperialist administrators of the Empire and dependent rulers, such as the autocratic Indian princes, to exploit the people which they govern for war purposes, and refuses to extend either political or economic freedom to India and the colonies.

(c) It recognises as provisional Governments for countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia representatives of aristocratic, military and capitalist cliques. It gives similar recognition to General De Gaulle's Council of Free Frenchmen, which is composed of imperialist officials and military leaders.

(d) It pursues an anti-working-class policy in relation to dictatorial States, as exemplified by its manoeuvring with the Mussolini Government before Italy entered the war, its closing of the Burma Road for three months in an effort to appease Japan, its continuous attempts to win the co-operation of the Franco Government in Spain, and its efforts to establish a government in Italy which, whilst breaking with the Axis alliance, would be reactionary in character and would serve the purposes of British Imperialism.

(e) It pursues a similarly opportunist policy towards Russia, for a long period hesitating to seek an alliance because of its opposition to Russia's economic system, then denouncing Russian aggression in Finland and the Baltic, and finally, through fear of Russia's relations with Germany, half-heartedly offering a basis of co-operation.

(f) Its class interests making impossible an alliance with the anti-fascist working-class forces in Europe and elsewhere, the National Government concentrates upon developing an alliance with the Government of the United States of America, the most powerful capitalist country in the world.

OBJECT OF THE RULING CLASS

5. It is clear from these policies that the British ruling class would use victory to supplement its rule in the Empire by the establishment of a British hegemony over Europe, subordinate financially to the U.S.A. and masked by insincere professions of loyalty to some form of League of Nations or European Federal Union, neither of which could be effective instruments for the maintenance of peace so long as the present economic and social structure remains.

AGAINST NAZI VICTORY

6. The I.L.P. recognises fully that a Nazi victory would be a disaster to mankind, involving the further enslavement of peoples, the suppression of what remains of liberty of thought and speech and person, and the crushing of an independent working-class movement. The I.L.P. stands against the system of Nazism as it has always done. The Party's record of assistance to German Socialists who have opposed Hitler, both before and since his seizure of power, is second to none. It will resist, as it has always resisted, the imposition of any form of

Fascism on the people of this country, and, whilst supporting industrial action in furtherance of class demands, opposes any form of deliberate sabotage calculated to assist Hitlerism.

AGAINST IMPERIALIST VICTORY

7. But the I.L.P. cannot identify itself with British Capitalist-Imperialism as the alternative to a Nazi victory—with a Capitalist-Imperialism which denies to the millions of peoples in India and the colonies national independence and freedom of speech and Press, and which condemns them to an ignorance leaving eighty per cent. of the population illiterate and to a poverty little removed from starvation.

FOR WORKERS' VICTORY

8. The I.L.P. stands on a third front, the front of the international working-class, the victims alike of Fascism in Europe, Imperialism in the colonies, and Capitalism at home. It is making its contribution to the development of a working-class movement in this and other countries which will demand a peace representing neither capitulation to Nazism nor the domination of Capitalist-Imperialism, but the victory of the common peoples over both.

I.L.P. AIMS

9. Positively the I.L.P. proposes :—

(a) Socialism instead of Capitalism ;

(b) The World Federation of Free Peoples, including the United Socialist States of Europe, instead of national sovereignty and alien imperialist rule over subject peoples ;

(c) The realisation of these aims by international action.

OUR PROGRAMME

10. In particular, it works to secure :—

(a) The development of a self-reliant spirit and action in the working-class movement, both politically and industrially, especially through the Workshop Committees and Shop Stewards, and action to secure the preservation of civil liberties, increased wages (in default of economic equality) to meet the rising cost of living, extended workshop control, the fair distribution of foodstuffs and other essentials, and the fullest protection of the people from air attacks, and adequate provision and compensation for the distressed, injured and bereaved victims of the war.

(b) Socialisation of land, industry, transport and finance, and the redistribution of the national income on the basis of need.

(c) The recognition of the independence of India and the liberation of peoples forcibly subjected to British rule in the colonies.

(d) The calling of an international conference to end the war on the basis of national freedom, the pooling of each country's resources for the rebuilding of the homes of the peoples and the well-being of the world, and the establishment of a social order abolishing imperialism and providing all peoples with the highest standard of life compatible with scientific and industrial development.

(e) The linking up of all working-class and Socialist forces which accept this policy with a view to conducting a sustained united campaign for its realisation.

A WORKERS' GOVERNMENT

11. Social equality in Britain, the liberation of the colonial peoples, and the calling of a world Conference to end the war on the basis of national liberty and social justice will not be realised until there is a Worker's Socialist Government in Britain and in all I.L.P. policy this is its underlying aim. The achievement of such a government would be a stimulation to similar changes in other countries and would encourage a movement throughout Europe to end the war by Socialism.

SOCIALIST PEACE OFFENSIVE

12. A Socialist government, whilst maintaining the defence of Britain as a Workers' State, would begin a vigorous Socialist peace offensive, making the proposal for a world Conference as outlined above and, at the same time, using the wireless, the Press and airplane leaflet distribution to appeal to the peoples in the Fascist-dominated territories over the heads of their rulers. The peoples everywhere desire peace and they would be likely to respond with a new hope to this initiative.

THE ONE HOPE

13. The alternative policy of relying purely on military means involves the continuation of the war, as the Prime Minister has indicated, for three or more years, until many of the cities of Britain and Europe have been turned into cemeteries, with the appalling prospect of the increasing effect both on the Continent and in Britain of the starvation blockade, an attempted British conquest of Europe, the vast loss of life this would inevitably cause, and at the end either an Imperialist or Nazi peace. Only by the adoption of the policy outlined above can the war be ended speedily on a basis of national freedom, social justice and enduring peace.

WHY THE I.L.P. VOTED AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT

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in the House of Commons against the Vote of Confidence

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